ARGON - CORONA

25X1

TCS-13630-62/KH

[redacted]

1 October 1962

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25X1 MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted]

SUBJECT: Comments on [redacted] 25X1

1. The author of subject article shows considerable knowledge of the purpose, characteristics and scheduling of the SAMOS program from E-1 through the E-6 package. A great deal of information on SAMOS has, of course, been released to the public. The details of all such releases are not known to NPIC, hence we do not know if the article contains any information on SAMOS which was not released in unclassified channels. With respect to potential quality of SAMOS, the article underestimates the theoretical "optical-film" (sic) resolution capability (given as 70-100 lines 1/mm, p. 11) but shows a good appreciation of potential end product ground resolution capabilities (0.7 to 17 meters, p. 11).

2. With respect to DISCOVERER, the article indicates that the program is for the "development of the system for return and recovery of the containers". It indicates that 11 containers have been returned as of December 1961 "with experimental reconnaissance apparatus and photographic film" (underscoring supplied). As far as we know at NPIC there has been no unclassified official release of information stating that there is photographic film in the DISCOVERER package. However, the existence of film of some kind might be inferred from statements regarding radiation studies. One does get the impression, not a certainty however, that the author considers DISCOVERER to be entirely experimental. There is no indication of a current useful operational capability.

3. In extension of the preceding sentence, the article gives the over-all impression that some Russian technologists are well aware of the theoretical resolution capabilities of satellite photography but that they are not yet aware that high quality photography is currently being obtained.

4. It is interesting to note that there is no reference in the article to ARGON or the ARGON concept. Geodetic satellites ANNA and SECOR are mentioned, but these projects have been discussed publicly

25X1

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in the U.S. and are conventional geodetic applications in the sense that they are utilized by observing satellites from the ground for triangulation purposes. The possibility of establishing geodetic control by photography from a satellite (ARGON) is not mentioned. Further, the key principle of satellite camera orientation by star photography is not suggested.

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Deputy Director
National Photographic Interpretation Center

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